DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 141 536 08 CE 011 378

AUTHOR Brooks, Kent
TITLE Writing Articles for News Media. Self-Paced Instructional Module. Module Number II-B.
INSTITUTION Mississippi Research and Curriculum Unit for Vocational and Technical Education, State College.; Mississippi State Dept. of Education, Jackson. Div. of Vocational and Technical Education.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Dec 76
GRANT G007500439
NOTE 23p.; For related documents see CE 011 375-407
AVAILABLE FROM Coordinator of Industry Services, Research and Curriculum Unit for Vocational-Technical Education, College of Education, Mississippi State, Mississippi 39762 ($50.00 for the set of 33)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Vocational Education; Behavioral Objectives; Criterion Referenced Tests; Individualized Programs; *Industrial Education; Industry; *Leadership Training; *Learning Activities; Learning Modules; *News Writing; *Public Relations; School Industry Relationship; Services; *Writing Exercises
IDENTIFIERS *Industry Services

ABSTRACT

One of 33 self-paced instructional modules for training industry services leaders to provide guidance in the performance of manpower services by public agencies to new and expanding private industry, this module contains three sequential learning activities on writing news articles about industry training activities. (Three of the other modules deal with other tasks also required for establishing contacts and relationships: Speaking to industrial and community groups, identifying functions of agencies involved in industry services, and developing an industry services brochure.) The first learning activity is designed to provide the learner with the needed background information, the second to give opportunity to apply that information in a practice situation, and the final check-out activity allows him to write news articles in a real work situation where he is employed or when serving as an intern learner. A learner self-test is included for help in determining when each objective is accomplished, and a performance checklist is appended for use by the learner and instructor/supervisor to assess progress. Sample news articles and an article planning worksheet are also appended for guidance in performing the learning activities. (JT)

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MODULE NUMBER: II-B

WRITING ARTICLES

FOR

NEWS MEDIA

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SELF-PACED
INSTRUCTIONAL MODULE

Compiled by:
Kent Brooks

Published by the:

Division of Vocational-Technical Education
Mississippi State Department of Education
Jackson, Mississippi

and

Research and Curriculum Unit
for Vocational-Technical Education
College of Education
Mississippi State University
Mississippi State, Mississippi

Direct inquiries to the:

Research and Curriculum Unit
for
Vocational-Technical Education
College of Education
Drawer DX
Mississippi State, Mississippi 39762
Phone - (601) 325-2510

This publication was prepared pursuant to a grant with the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Contractors undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgment in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Office of Education position or policy.

Grant Number: G007500439

December, 1976

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Instructional Procedure 1

Supplementary Teaching/Learning Aids 2

Objectives 2

Introduction 3

Learning Activity I: Information 4

Learning Activity II: Practice Performance 13

Check-Out Activity: Performance in Real Work Situation. 14

Appendices

A. Performance Checklist. 17

B. Sample Announcement of Industry Services Program. 19

C. Excerpts, Industry Services News Article. 21

D. Article Planning Worksheet 23

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

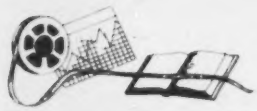
This module contains two sequential learning activities and a final check-out activity. A brief overview precedes each learning activity and the final check-out activity. Each learning activity and the final check-out activity provide learning experiences to help you accomplish the objectives. Feedback devices (learner self-test, news article planning worksheet, and performance checklist) are provided to help you determine when each objective has been accomplished. Sample news articles are presented in the Appendices to guide you in performing the learning activities.

The first learning activity is designed to provide you with the needed **background information**. The second learning activity is designed to give you an opportunity to apply that information in **practice** situations. The **Check-Out Activity** is the final learning activity. It is designed to allow you to write news articles in a real work situation, such as when you are employed or when you are serving as an intern learner. The **Performance Checklist** (Appendix A) is used by the learner and the instructor/supervisor to assess progress. The checklist is applicable for both practice performance and performance in a real work situation.

After reading the **Objectives** and the **Introduction** on pages 2 and 3, you should be able to determine how much of the module you will need to complete before the **Check-Out Activity**.

* If you already have the necessary **background information** required for writing news articles, you may not need to complete **Learning Activity I**, p. 4.
* If you already have had **practice** in writing news articles, you may not need to complete **Learning Activity II**, p. 13.
* Instead, with the approval of your instructor or supervisor, you may choose to proceed directly to the **Check-Out Activity**, p. 14, and attempt to write news articles when you have access to a **real work situation**.

Your instructor or supervisor may be contacted if you have any difficulty with directions, or in assessing your progress at any time.



SUPPLEMENTARY TEACHING/LEARNING AIDS

An effort has been made to make this module as self-contained as possible. The information contained in the module should be sufficient to develop "entry-level" knowledge and skills. However, much more has been written on this topic. The advanced learner may wish to attain higher levels of knowledge and skills.

A list of resources which supplement those contained within the module follows. Check with your instructor or supervisor (1) to determine the availability and the location of these resources, and (2) to get assistance in setting up additional learning activities.

There are no prerequisites for completing this module. However, the module may be used in conjunction with module number VII-C, **Announcing the Opening of a Training Program**.

Learning Activity I

*Any of numerous books on advertising and business communication

Learning Activity II

*Local newspapers to examine news articles on industry services/vocational education programs

Check-Out Activity

*An editor of a newspaper

*One or more resource persons who have written articles for industry services programs

OBJECTIVES

1. After completing the required reading, take the learner self-test to demonstrate that you have attained the knowledge of gathering facts, presenting facts, and writing a news article. You should complete all items correctly. **(Learning Activity I)**

II. After analyzing the performance instructions, complete all the designated learning experiences in planning and writing a news article in a practice situation. Your work must conform to the article planning worksheet and performance checklist provided in the Appendices. **(Learning Activity II)**

III. In an actual work situation, plan, write, and submit an industry services news article to a local newspaper. Satisfactory performance will be realized when all items on the performance checklist (Appendix A) are rated "yes." **(Check-Out Activity)**

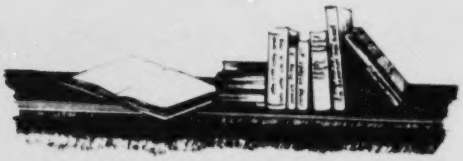
WRITING ARTICLES FOR NEWS MEDIA

INTRODUCTION

The industry services leader will likely be called upon by the industry, cooperating agencies, or the public to release news items about training activities. More often than not these items must be in writing. Accuracy of the information presented cannot be overemphasized. Errors in releasing information about training activities can be harmful rather than helpful.

This unit will assist you in writing news articles accurately and clearly. Sample news articles are provided for review. Although the format of an article is usually arranged by the newspaper copy personnel, the industry services leader is free to suggest how the copy may be arranged on the page.

No attempt will be made to teach basic writing skills. Rather, emphasis will be placed on the practice of writing newspaper announcements and stories which relate to industry training services. The assumption is made that newspaper articles can be readily adapted for radio and television announcements.



LEARNING ACTIVITY I: INFORMATION

You should study the information presented in the following pages. You may wish to read supplementary information from advertising and business communication books. After reading these materials, you will demonstrate knowledge of planning and writing a news article by completing the **Learner Self-Test**, p. 9 . You will be evaluating your knowledge by comparing your self-test answers with the **Answers to Self-Test**, p. 11.

I. TERMS UNIQUE TO MODULE

A. **Copy**. The contents to be used in a news article, usually typewritten.

B. **Feature story**. A written description of on-going training activities for a designated industry.

C. **Headline**. A written statement, usually in larger type at the top of a newspaper article, giving a short statement of article contents.

D. **Layout**. Arrangement of the written content on a page.

E. **News announcement**. A concise summary of planned training and related activities for a designated industry.

F. **News article**. A written news report. Both announcements of training activities and feature reports on training and industrial activities are considered to be news articles.

II. SELECTING INFORMATION

It is not in the best interest of the school to release certain information which is considered confidential to the industry. The industry services leader must determine which information can be freely shared with others and which must be closely guarded. The following are some areas where information must be carefully analyzed before releasing news articles.

A. **Site location of a new industry** (where and when)

B. **Reputation and standing of firm**

1. How long has the industry been in business?
2. What are the company policies which are indicative of its integrity?
3. What is the authoritative experience of management?

C. **Production or service personnel requirements**

D. **Start–up date for new or expanding industry**

E. **Quality of products or design**

F. **Special processes or machinery**

G. **Achievements of products**

H. **Users of products**

I. **Testimonies of others as to performance of industry products**

J. **Awards or contests won by the industry**

III. PRESENTING FACTS

A. **Getting attention.** "Good writing is easier to read than to skip."

1. Headlines get people into the copy. Rewards for reading the headlines can be expressed in positive or negative terms.
   a. Positive--"Announcing–Ideal Jobs for Those Who Want Security"
   b. Negative–"Is Job Boredom Your Problem?"
2. Ways to get attention
   a. Graphic art. Focus on unusual.

      Is this interesting?

      Does this hold attention longer?

      Company logos may be appropriate for use in news articles to get attention.
   b. Pictures
   c. Product in use

B. **Showing people advantages**

1. Pride or accomplishment
2. More comfort and enjoyment

3. Security
4. More money

IV. LENGTH OF COPY

The length of an article will depend upon the message to be conveyed. The focus on the article should be on getting interest and persuading the reader to respond.

A. Ways to hold interest

1. Start copy with pertinent question or provide strong consumer benefit.
2. Be specific. Tell who, what, when, where, and how.
3. Select items with greatest general appeal.
4. Try to make article entertaining to read.
5. Consider suggesting that the editor use subheadings in question form or make them tell a quick sequential sales story.
6. Use short, simple sentences.
7. Make article compact, rather than loose with mere verbiage.

B. Factors which dictate the length of articles

1. Immediacy of need for printed article to appear
2. Cost for space
3. Objective of article. Is it an announcement of training slot openings or is it a detailed portrayal of an ongoing training program?
4. Type readership

V. WAYS TO INCREASE INQUIRIES FOR AN ANNOUNCEMENT

A. Include information in addition to selling talk.

B. Feature the name and location of the industry.

C. Tell how the inquiry may have practical use.

D. Be specific about such factors as products, training start-up dates, and training times.

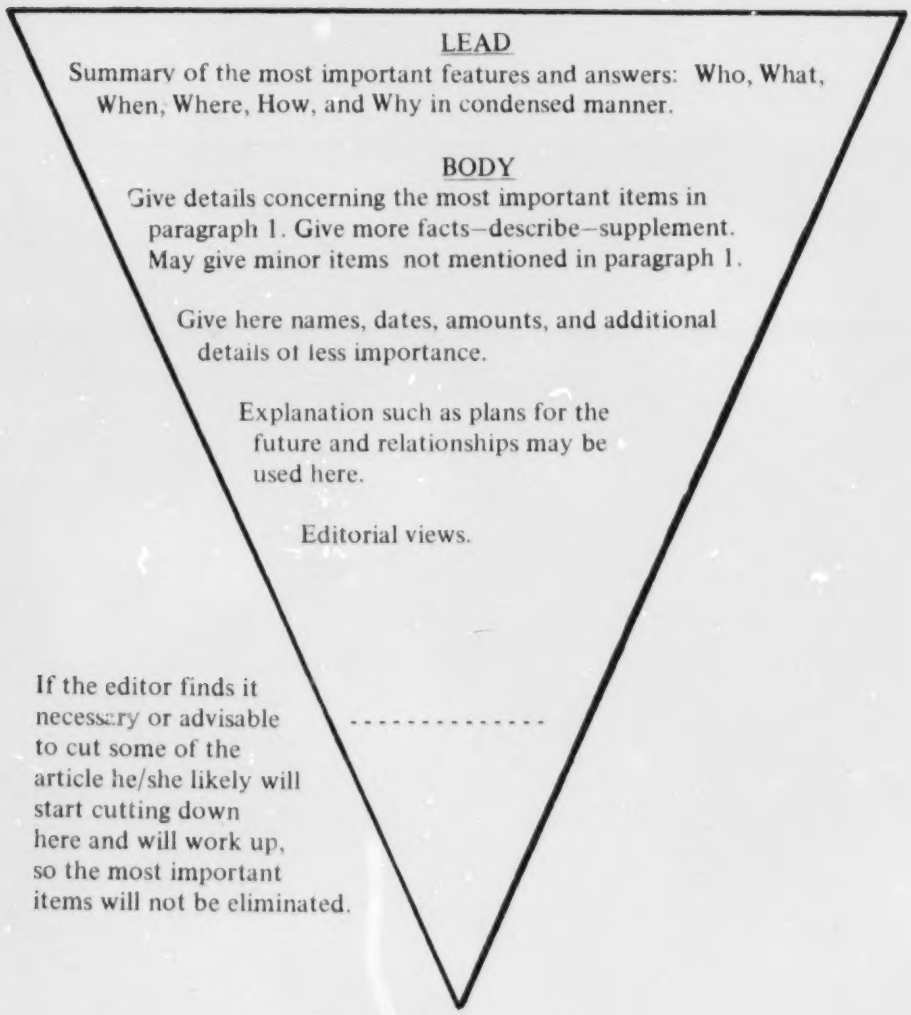
E. Be specific about the agency responsible for the training activities.

F. State the name, full address, and telephone number of the contact source. Also, indicate the hours of day and days of week contact source can be reached.

VI. WRITING COPY

Many newspapers require that articles submitted be typed, double-spaced. Although the newspaper may provide for the layout and typography, you should know approximately how the final copy will appear. In fact, a thumbnail sketch of the article layout will insure that the article is properly presented. It is also desirable to proof the finished or presentation lay-out prepared by the newspaper staff.

The generally accepted form of the news story follows the pattern of the inverted pyramid as below:


LEAD
Summary of the most important features and answers: Who, What, When, Where, How, and Why in condensed manner.
Paragraph 1
BODY
Paragraph 2
Give details concerning the most important items in paragraph 1. Give more facts–describe–supplement. May give minor items not mentioned in paragraph 1.
Paragraph 3
Give here names, dates, amounts, and additional details of less importance.
Paragraph 4
Explanation such as plans for the future and relationships may be used here.
Editorial views.
If the editor finds it necessary or advisable to cut some of the article he/she likely will start cutting down here and will work up, so the most important items will not be eliminated.

Many example layouts appear each day in newspapers, some good and some bad. Numerous samples of copy can also be obtained from commercial textbooks on advertising. Two sample items appear in Appendices B and C. The first item is concerned with a brief announcement of training opportunities for local citizens. The second item is a partial feature story about a training program in progress.

VII. GETTING COPY PUBLISHED

After factual information has been compiled, the writer should discuss with the newspaper editor how the item will be presented. The newspaper staff may have certain layout criteria which must be followed, particularly for feature news stories.

VIII. USING THE COPY FOR RADIO AND TV ANNOUNCEMENTS

Copy prepared for newspaper articles may also be used for spot announcements or news stories on radio and television.

*Continue this learning activity by taking the **Learner Self-Test** which follows.

LEARNER SELF-TEST

This is a checkpoint knowledge test needed before proceeding to the writing of news articles in practice situations. Follow the instructions provided with each item. Check your answers with the **Answers to Self-Test** which follow. If you fail to complete all items correctly, you may wish to refer back to parts of the module information.

1. Which item below is **more closely** related to the information needed for an announcement or story? Circle your answer.
   a. Items which get attention
   b. Items which show people advantages
   c. Information which is not confidential to the industry
   d. Items which increase the length of articles
2. "Good _____ is easier to read than skip."
3. List four ways to hold interest in an announcement or story.
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.
4. Which one of the following would **most likely** increase inquiries from an announcement or story. Circle your answer.
   a. Print a short article.
   b. State the name, full address, and telephone number of contact source.
   c. Pay more for the article.
   d. Use a negative type headline.

ANSWERS TO SELF-TEST

1. c
2. Writing
3. Any 4 of following:
   a. Start with pertinent question or provide strong consumer benefit.
   b. Be specific.
   c. Select items with greatest general appeal.
   d. Make article entertaining to read.
   e. Use subheadings in question form.
   f. Use short, simple sentences.
   g. Make compact article.
4. b.

*Proceed to the next learning activity for practice performance experiences.

LEARNING ACTIVITY II: PRACTICE PERFORMANCE

You will be required to practice writing an industry services news article. Several subactivities must be completed before the article is written. You may wish to refer back to parts of the module information. You may wish to read one or more articles on advertising and business communication from outside resources. You may also read several local newspapers to determine the layout of articles. You must complete the **Article Planning Worksheet** from Appendix D. You must write an article of your choosing promoting some aspect of industry services. You will be evaluating your performance in writing a news article using the **Performance Checklist** from Appendix A.

I. Determine the objective of the article. Will it be an announcement of a training service to be provided? Or, will it be a feature story about an industry training program in progress? Complete the **Article Planning Worksheet** from Appendix D.

II. Plan the elements that are to appear in the announcement or story, such as the headlines, the copy, special attention-getting statements, and photographs. You may refer back to the module information and the sample articles in Appendices B and C for completing this part of the article.

III. Prepare a preliminary copy of the proposed announcement or story. Arrange the elements within the article until the most pleasing emphasis is found. Revise parts of the copy as necessary to give maximum effectiveness. Refer to local newspapers for examples of news articles.

IV. Prepare the copy to be sent to the newspaper, illustrations, detailed information and data, and photographs. The following general procedures should be used to prepare the copy:

A. Place your name, address, and telephone number in top left-hand corner.

B. Include the release date of story in upper right-hand corner.

C. Type copy on one side of paper only.

D. Double-space copy.

E. Leave top third of first page (or three inches) blank to permit notations by editor.

F. End each page with a complete paragraph.

G. When story runs to more than one page, write "(more)" in lower right-hand corner of each page except last.

H. Leave one-inch margins on sides and bottom of each page.

I. Attach photograph to article and correctly identify all persons in the photograph.

V. Proofread finished article.

VI. Use the **Performance Checklist** from Appendix A to determine if the practice article is prepared according to designated criteria. Follow the instructions provided in the checklist.

*You should now be prepared to write a news article in a real work situation. Proceed to the **Check-Out Activity.**

CHECK-OUT ACTIVITY: PERFORMANCE IN REAL WORK SITUATION

The activity which follows is intended to be conducted in an actual on-the-job situation. It may be performed without completing the two learning activities, if you think you have the proficiency to do so.

You must plan, write, and submit an announcement of training program openings. You must also plan, write, and submit a feature story on the various activities of a school-industry training program. You may consult with a newspaper editor to determine the exact way the article should be prepared and submitted. You may also discuss the article with other persons in your school who have prepared and submitted articles to newspapers.

I. In a real work situation, plan, write, and submit a newspaper article **announcing** the opening of a training program for a new or existing industry. Your performance will be judged by your instructor or supervisor using a checklist. All items on the **Performance Checklist** (Appendix A) must be rated "yes."

II. In a real work situation, plan, write, and submit a newspaper article which **features** the activities of a school-industry training program. Your performance will be judged by your instructor or supervisor using a checklist. All items on the **Performance Checklist** (Appendix A) must be rated "yes."

*After completing the **Check-Out Activity**, you may select another module for study. Your instructor or supervisor may be contacted if you have any difficulty in selecting a module.

APPENDIX A

PERFORMANCE CHECKLIST

Writing articles for news media.

INSTRUCTIONS: If the performance is satisfactory, write YES in the space provided. If the performance is unsatisfactory, write NO in the space. Each item must be rated "yes" for satisfactory task performance.

1. Article was free of writing errors (grammar, spelling, and punctuation). ☐
2. Article was free of potentially damaging information. ☐
3. Article was compact ☐
4. All information in the article was clearly presented. ☐
5. Article was interesting to read. ☐
6. Elements in the article were well organized. ☐

☐

☐

☐

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENT
INDUSTRY SERVICES PROGRAM

WHO SAID

GOOD JOBS

WERE NOT AVAILABLE ANYMORE?

THEY ARE!

WITH 100 HOURS PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING, YOU MAY WORK AT HIGH WAGES AS A MACHINE OPERATOR, WELDER, OR ASSEMBLER AT THE NEW ABC MANUFACTURING COMPANY.

ABC
MANUFACTURING
COMPANY

Training program to be provided by Edward County Junior College Vocational-Technical Department. First class will begin June 15, 6:30 p.m. Limited openings.

Apply for training in person between hours of 8 a.m.–5 p.m. weekdays at Edward County Junior College Vocational-Technical Department, 116 West Central Street, Watertown, Mississippi. Telephone 329-4200.

FOR HIGH QUALITY
ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS

APPENDIX C

EXCERPTS
INDUSTRY SERVICES NEWS ARTICLE

PROGRESS 76
SCHOOL BELLS ARE RINGING AGAIN FOR LOCAL CITIZENS

By James Wilson

The average young adult entering the job market may retrain for new jobs at least five times during his/her working career. Many residents of the Watertown area are experiencing one such event and are enjoying every minute of it. The training is focused on new jobs in machine operation, welding, and assembling, soon to be available at the ABC Manufacturing Company. The new plant is locating in the Edward County Industrial Park.

This is the first plant to locate in the new Industrial Park and the first training program offered in the new start-up training facility at Edward County Junior College. Concerned residents and government officials made a decision in 1975 to construct the new start-up facility. Efforts are being consolidated to provide an organized program of start-up training for both expanding industry and new industry moving into the area.

A shortage of trained workers in machine operation, welding, and assembling became apparent immediately when ABC Manufacturing Company officials began plans to locate in Watertown. A start-up training program to provide the new industry with an immediate supply of trained personnel seemed to be the only solution to the problem.

"We hope to start production around August 15 and there is little doubt that the personnel in the training program will be ready," said Bryan Baker, Vice-President, ABC Manufacturing Company.

The plant is expected to employ 150 people when in full operation.

APPENDIX D

ARTICLE PLANNING WORKSHEET

The Prospective Audience

1. What group of people do I want to reach?

2. What are their interests and concerns?

3. Are their interests similar or greatly varied?

4. What is their range in age and education level?

5. How much do they already know about the industry services program?

The Prospective News Outlet

1. What daily and weekly newspapers are read by the people of this community?

2. What other newsletters, journals, or magazines might publish the planned article?

3. Which newspaper or publication would most likely reach the above described audience?

The Industry Services Program

1. What aspects of the industry services program do I want to promote or inform the public about?

2. Which of these might most interest the audience described above?

3. What do I wish to accomplish through my article?

Final Topic Selection

LIST OF INDUSTRY SERVICES LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MODULES

I. **Orientation to Industry Services**

- A. Introduction to Industry Services
- B. Industry Services Leadership Development Program: Guide for Using the Self-Paced Instructional Modules

II. **Establishing Contacts and Relationships**

- A. Speaking to Industrial and Community Groups
- B. Writing Articles for News Media
- C. Identifying Functions of Agencies Involved in Industry Services
- D. Developing a Brochure for Industry Services

III. **Obtaining Agreements**

- A. Developing Training Agreements
- B. Developing a Lead-time Schedule
- C. Interpreting Legislation Related to Industry Services

IV. **Identifying Training Needs**

- A. Collecting Framework Production and Training Information
- B. Selecting Types of Training Programs
- C. Preparing a Budget for an Industry Services Project

V. **Acquiring Resources**

- A. Selecting Instructors for Industry Services
- B. Securing a Training Site
- C. Securing Training Equipment, Tools, and Supplies

VI. **Training Instructors for Industry Services**

Training Instructors for Industry Services

VII. **Preparing for Training**

- A. Adapting the Training Site to Training Needs
- B. Evaluating Safety Conditions at Training Sites
- C. Announcing the Opening of a Training Program

VIII. **Preparing Training Materials**

- A. Conducting a Task Analysis
- B. Developing Performance Objectives
- C. Determining Types of Instructional Methods and Media
- D. Developing Performance Tests
- E. Developing Training Manuals
- F. Preparing Videotapes for an Industry Services Program
- G. Setting Up Learning Centers for Industry Services Programs

IX. **Selecting Candidates**

Developing a Plan for Testing and Counseling Applicants for a Training Program

X. **Monitoring Training Programs**

- A. Assisting in Providing Pre-Employment and In-Plant Training
- B. Developing a Procedure for Keeping Participating Agencies Informed About Training Program Activities
- C. Monitoring Training Programs for Progress and Expenditures

XI. **Closing Training Programs**

Closing a Training Program

XII. **Placing Program Participants**

Developing a Plan for Placing Graduates of a Pre-Employment Training Program

XIII. **Evaluating Industry Services Programs**

Evaluating Industry Services Programs

Direct Inquiries To: Research and Curriculum Unit for Vocational-Technical Education, College of Education, Mississippi State University, Drawer DX, Mississippi State, MS 39762
(601) 325-2510